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Novel Sneaks Peek at Spying Game

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WASHINGTON, Nov. 30 — Assassinations, espionage, wiretaps, kidnapping and covert action — all serve as chilling fodder for David Wise's muse.

Mr. Wise, a former White House correspondent for The New York Herald Tribune, has written five nonfiction books and two novels that have focused on secrecy and the American intelligence and national security ap-

paratus. He is one of Washington's better-known chroniclers of the capital's darker corridors of power, and his books are read for their inside peek into that hidden world.

His latest novel, "The Children's Game," is a story about a former spy who is brought back into the Central Intelligence Agency to track down a foreign agent who has "burrowed" deep into the organization. It is based partly on factual events and, Mr. Wise said, discloses some of the highly classified operational techniques used by intelligence agents. It also discloses Mr. Wise's deep ambivalence toward the C.I.A. and the craft of spying, and attempts to crack one of the greatest of intelligence secrets: why spies become spies.

"One of the things I tried to do in this book was to get into the mind and motivation of spies," Mr. Wise said. "How can one spend a lifetime living in a secret world, the true nature of which is unknown to even wives and children? What sustains them?"

Secrecy Is Its Own Reward

One of the answers, he suggested, is that secrecy is its own reward — secrecy and power. But it is secret power, he adds, the sense of apartness, of being different from others.

"I make the analogy, and that is where the title comes from, with the games we play as children," he continued. "You have a secret club and its importance is defined by the kids who aren't part of it."

The plot of "The Children's Game" revolves around the "Halloween Massacre," the dismissal in October 1977 of 250 high-level clandestine operators by Adm. Stansfield Turner, then Director of Central Intelligence. Admiral Turner later said he had wanted to clean out agents who had become too set in their ways.

In "The Children's Game," Mr. Wise writes about espionage techniques that he said are now in use. His agents use noiseless "low signature" bullets that can be used instead of a silencer. They obtain urine samples from major world leaders to analyze their health. They use a secret electronic device to pick locks, and disguise some of the agency's classified trash in bags labeled "dog food."

Mr. Wise is able to write about thinly disguised C.I.A. personalities and disclose espionage details while former C.I.A. employees, who are required to sign an agreement not to publish anything about the agency without specific prior approval, have run into difficulty ranging from in-

junctions against publishing to the seizing of the writers' royalties.

"I think those agreements violate the First Amendment rights of the employees," Mr. Wise said. "I would rather see the C.I.A. do something about the problem of former agents like Edwin Wilson or Frank Terpil who sell their knowledge to foreign Governments. While the agency was busy collecting royalties from authors, Terpil and Wilson were selling explosives to Qaddafi." Mr. Wilson and Mr. Terpil were later convicted of selling explosives to the Libyan leader. Mr. Terpil is a fugitive.

C.I.A. Acts Against Book

"What we do is often mischaracterized," said Charles Wilson, chairman of the agency's publication review board, which since 1977 has examined 994 manuscripts. "We only review the material for classified information. First Amendment rights clearly guide us."

Mr. Wise's one confrontation with the C.I.A. was in 1964 when the agency attempted to censor "The Invisible Government," an early nonfiction look at the C.I.A. that Mr. Wise wrote with Thomas Ross. A C.I.A. document, later obtained by Mr. Wise under the Freedom of Information Act, recommended, "such assets as the agency may have to secure unfavorable book reviews of 'The Invisible Government' be used at the proper time to lessen the book's impact."

"When my first book came out it was said that I was hanging around bars in McLean listening to conversations of C.I.A. people," he recalled. "The truth is that I was getting a good deal of information sitting in Allen Dulles's garden talking with the director of the C.I.A."

So what is the role of an intelligence agency in a democracy?

"I think we need intelligence agencies, but they need to operate under control," he replied. "Many people who went into the C.I.A. with a desire to serve their country began to feel that the agency had a higher morality."

"If we let these agencies increase their power and diminish our liberties when there is a perceived threat," he continued, "in the end we are going to change the nature of the institutions we are trying to protect. The face in the mirror will no longer be our own."



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 David Wise